



NEC Bridge Festival

Saturday, February 2, 2002
Bulletin Number 5

Editors: Eric Kokish
Richard Colker

NEC Cup: SemiFinal Results

Rank	Team	1 st Half	2 nd Half	Final
1	e-bridge (+.5)	38	31	69
3	England	40	74	114
4	England/Norway (+.5)	18	51	69
6-8	Canada	76	48	124

NEC Cup: QuarterFinal Results

Rank	Team	1 st Half	2 nd Half	Final
1	e-bridge (+.5)	75	76	151
5	NAITO	32	45	77
4	England/Norway (+.5)	55	46	101
6-8	USA	43	52	95
3	England (+.5)	68	8	76
6-8	India	25	46	71
2	Sweden (+.5)	47	26	73
6-8	Canada	22	102	124

Starting Times

	Match	Starting Time	Rooms
Today	NEC Cup Final 1 & Playoff	10:00-12:20	Room 416 & 417
	NEC Cup Final 2 & Playoff	12:30-14:50	
	NEC Cup Final 3	16:00-18:20	
	NEC Cup Final 4	18:30-20:50	
	OUCHI Cup	10:00-17:00	Room 501 & 502
Tomorrow	Asuka Cup	10:00-17:00	Room 301 & 302
	Closing Ceremony	18:00-19:00	Room 303 & 304

NEC Cup 2002: Conditions of Contest

An 8 round Swiss, qualifying the top 8 teams to the Knockout phase; no playbacks.

V.P. Scale WBF 20-board scale (a copy can be found in the score book provided in your NEC Bridge Festival bag).

Seating Rights Toss of coin 5 minutes before start of match. Failure will constitute loss of rights.

KO-Phase Seating The winner of a coin toss has the choice of seating in either of the two 20-board segments. In the four 16-board segments of the final, the choices will alternate over segments.

Swiss Pairings For the first and second Swiss matches, pairings will be determined by randomly pairing each of the teams numbered 1-19 with one of the teams numbered 20-38. Subsequent match pairings will be based on current VP totals.

Home and visiting 1st numbered team sits N/S in open room, E/W in closed room.

Tie-Breaks At the end of the Swiss: ties will be broken by the result of the head-to-head match (if one was played) or an IMP quotient otherwise. If more than two teams are involved, WBF 2001 Conditions of Contest procedures will apply.

In the Knockout Phase, the team with the higher position from the Swiss will be assumed to have a ½-IMP carryover.

Systems No HUM methods will be permitted in this event.
In the Swiss, no Brown Sticker methods will be permitted.
In the KO Phase, Brown Sticker methods will be permitted only if filed before the start of the Swiss. Written defenses to such methods may be used at the table.

Length of Matches 2 hours and 50 minutes will be allotted for each 20-board segment (or 2 hours and 20 minutes for each 16-board segment of the final). In addition a 5-minute grace period will be allotted to each team. Overtime and slow play penalties as per WBF 2001 Conditions of Contest.

Appeals The WBF Code of Practice will be in effect. The Chief Director will have 12C3 authority. Appeals which are found to be without merit may incur a penalty of up to 3 VPs.

Match Scoring Pick-up slips are to be completed and all match results are to be verified against the official result sheet (posted at the end of each match); score corrections and notifications of appeals will be permitted up until the start of the next session.

KO Draw The team finishing 1st in the Swiss may choose their opponent from the teams finishing 4th-8th. The team finishing 2nd will have their choice of the remaining teams from the 4th-8th group. And so on.

In addition, before the start of the Knockout Phase and after all quarter-final draws have been determined, the team that finishes 1st in the Swiss chooses their semi-final opponent from any of the other three quarter-final matches.

Congratulations PABF Women: Good Luck in Salt Lake City

Congratulations to Japan's PABF Women's Team, who leave today to participate in the Salt Lake City Olympic demonstration event, February 2-6. They will meet nine other women's bridge teams from around the world to show the IOC just how exciting our game can be. We wish them the best of luck and a safe and successful trip to the U.S.



Pre-Registration for OUCHI Cup and Asuka Cup

ALERT! Players planning to enter a team in Saturday's OUCHI Cup must pre-register by Friday night at 9 p.m. Players planning to play in Sunday's Asuka Cup are similarly required to pre-register by Saturday night at 10 p.m. All pre-registration will be done in the Secretariat (Room 412). Entry fees will be waived for players eliminated from the NEC Cup at any stage and who wish to play in either of the two weekend events.

For those wishing to take a day or two off from bridge and looking for suggestions of what to do, we suggest a visit to Kamakura (a small town about 30 minutes by train from Yokohama, famous for its temples, giant statue of Buddha, lake and tourist shops) or a day trip to Tokyo (try the Ginza shopping area). Those interested should check with Hotel Information for travel details.

NEC Cup Bridge Festival on the Web

Call your friends and tell them that your exploits are being chronicled on the World Wide Web. They can follow all of the action at the 7th NEC Cup Bridge Festival by surfing to:

<http://bridge.cplaza.ne.jp/necfest.html>

– or –

<http://www.jcbl.or.jp>

– or –

<http://www.greatbridgelinks.com>



"All right, who's going for the pizza?"



"If you can't dazzle them with your brilliance, confuse them with your bullshit."



"Oops, I think we missed the last train to the Ginza."

QuarterFinal Drama

by Rich Colker

The England/Norway vs USA match is being covered in detail elsewhere in this bulletin (see p. 5), so we try here to give you a sense of what happened in the other three quarterfinal matches.

The Defenders vs the Home Team:



The Japanese ladies proved their mettle by qualifying in a very respectable fifth position, but **e-bridge** vs **NAITO** was a mismatch from the start. In the first half e-bridge won 37 off their 75 IMPs—almost their entire half-time lead—by bidding and/or making games or slams that were missed at the other table. In addition, many of the IMPs they lost were due to their own aggression (overbidding) rather than their opponents' good bidding or play. The lone exception was an excellent 6♠ slam Setoguchi-Ota bid which was missed by Lev-Blanchard. The second half provided several hands on which the NAITO ladies outdid the e-bridgers, but by then it was too little too late. Lev-Blanchard let through an unmakeable 4♥ game that failed at the other table (3NT, however, was quite cold). Setoguchi-Ota made a very difficult 4♠ and bid an excellent 6♠ slam that was missed by Lev-Blanchard at the other table (although they did get to 5♠, if that's any consolation). Setoguchi-Ota also made an impossible 3NT that failed in the replay. But there were other similar results that favored e-bridge and in the final analysis e-bridge prevailed in a high-scoring second half in which they averaged almost a 2 IMP per board advantage. Well done, ladies, and good luck to the defenders.

The Empire vs the ex-Colony:



Given the history between these two countries, it's certain that India would have liked nothing better than to hand it to the old imperialists, but that was not to be. England took a 43-IMP halftime lead into the clubhouse in a session in which India scored IMPs on only three boards (one of them a single IMP, the other two double-digit pick-ups). But the second half was all India, who managed to reverse the first-half trend. In the replay it was England who could manage to win IMPs on only three boards, all of them minor pick-ups (totaling 8 IMPs). But the second half was not all roses for India. Of the eight boards on which they won IMPs, six were also minor pick-ups (amounting to 19 IMPs total; the other two boards, by contrast, provided 27 IMPs). And when the smoke had cleared India had given her majesty all she could hope for but fell just 6 IMPs short of moving on to the semifinals.

Oh, Canada! (vs Sweden):



It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. But the worst was far worse than the best was better for Sweden. Sweden won the first half by 25 IMPs in what was, to that point, the lowest scoring of the four quarterfinal matches. In fact, there were only two double-digit swings, both of which went to Sweden. (The Canadians, however, could boast that they had won the set 7-6 in Board-a-Match scoring.) But the second half was a comeback story that even Hollywood would not try to sell to an adult audience. Sweden won IMPs on only five boards and only one of them was a double-digit swing, Canada, on the other hand, won IMPs on 11 of the remaining 15 boards, seven of which were double digit swings, and averaged 5 IMPs per board over the remaining four. When the smoke had cleared, Canada had won 102 IMPs in the second 20-board segment, outscoring the Swedes by almost 4 IMPs per board. It was Canada who would face the combined forces of her majesty and Norway in the semifinals.

The QuarterFinals of The NEC Cup

by Eric Kokish

With 20 deals remaining, we will focus on the closest of the four matches, **Mavromichalis vs USA**, with Brigitte's Bandits ahead by 12 IMPs, 55-43. The Americans added yet another player overnight in the person of **Kazuo Saeki**, who will play with **Jaggy Shivdasani**. When **Roger Bates** had to cancel at the last moment, USA was able to co-opt first **Hiroshi Hisatomi** and then **Teruyoshi Hara** to step in, and they were instrumental in helping the Americans to qualify for the quarterfinals. Of the other matches, Sweden and Canada was still fairly close, but e-bridge and England were well ahead of their opponents.

Second Half (Boards 21-40):

Bd: 21	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 862		
Vul: None	♥ K1032		
	♦ AJ92		
	♣ AJ		
West		East	
♠ Q		♠ 1093	
♥ AQ76		♥ 984	
♦ 107		♦ 86543	
♣ 987642		♣ 103	
	South		
	♠ AKJ754		
	♥ J5		
	♦ KQ		
	♣ KQ5		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
	1♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

The 6NT reached by Shivdasani/Saeki was a better contract than the Hacketts' 6♠, although it was unlikely that West would lead a heart from one honor or neither honor after **Justin's** 1♥ opening. In the event, **Jim Robison** led the ♣9 against 6♠; +1010. It was natural for **Terje Aa** to lead a heart against 6NT; +990. 1 IMP to Mavromichalis, 56-43.

Bd: 22	North		
Dlr: East	♠ K53		
Vul: N/S	♥ A		
	♦ A104		
	♣ A108742		
West		East	
♠ AJ10986		♠ Q72	
♥ Q874		♥ 10965	
♦ ---		♦ 852	
♣ KQ3		♣ J95	
	South		
	♠ 4		
	♥ KJ32		
	♦ KQJ9763		
	♣ 6		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
		Pass	1♦
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦
Dbl	Rdbl	2♠	3♦
3♠	4♠	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♦	6♥	Dbl
Pass	Pass	6♠	Dbl
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♦
4♠	5♦	All Pass	

Contrasting styles were very much in evidence on Board 2. Saeki's initial pass did not instill much hope for slam in Jaggy, who was just guessing when he tried 5♦ over 4♠, Aa's aggressive raise to 2♠ allowing **Glenn Groetheim** to revalue his hand positively. Saeki made seven on a heart lead, ruffing out the clubs; +640.

The auction was completely different in the Open Room, after **Jason** opened 1♦. When **Mark Itabashi** did not raise spades, it was not practical for Robison to do more than he did, and Justin drove to slam once Jason cooperated with a somewhat atypical 5♣ cue-bid with shortage in his partner's main suit. That would have been an easy +1370, so Itabashi's decision to sacrifice was a good one. 6♠ doubled went down four; -800, holding the USA's loss to 4 IMPs. Mavromichalis, 60-43.

Bd:23	North		
Dlr: South	♠ A108		
Vul: E/W	♥ QJ8		
	♦ 93		
	♣ Q10964		
West	East		
♠ 5	♠ KJ9642		
♥ A102	♥ ---		
♦ AKJ64	♦ 108752		
♣ A852	♣ KJ		
	South		
	♠ Q73		
	♥ K976543		
	♦ Q		
	♣ 73		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
3NT	4♥	4♠	3♥
			All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
3NT	Pass	4♣*	3♥
4♦*	Pass	4♠	Pass
			All Pass

Again, the Americans did rather less with their cards than their counterparts, Jaggy refraining from raising to 4♥ because he liked his chances of defeating 3NT. As is so often the case on this type of deal, the final contract was not the one that the reticent player had in mind. Both Souths led the ♦Q against 4♠. Declarer won and led a trump to the king when North followed low. A second trump went to North's ten and South got a diamond ruff to hold the contract to 10 tricks. No swing.



Bd: 24	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 95		
Vul: Both	♥ K65		
	♦ AJ1076		
	♣ K54		
West	East		
♠ AK8	♠ Q762		
♥ A10832	♥ 9		
♦ K942	♦ 85		
♣ 6	♣ Q109872		
	South		
	♠ J1043		
	♥ QJ74		
	♦ Q3		
	♣ AJ3		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
1♥	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♦	Dbl	All Pass	

Perhaps it's strictly a matter of style whether East should pass 1♥ or respond 1♠ or 1NT (intending to bid 3♣ over a putative 2♦ rebid), but my instincts and sample of personal experiences have convinced me that it will gain in the long run to start with 1NT. Itabashi's 1♠ might have caught a raise in some partnerships but Robison, lacking a fourth trump, preferred 2♦, which led to an unpleasant contract that yielded five tricks after North started ♦A, ♦J; -300.

When Aa passed 1♥ he might have had a bit more than the traditional "less than 6 points," but on the other hand, he didn't have to hold anything of value at all. Thus, Groetheim was playing with fire when he volunteered 2♦ and when Jaggy handed him his head it was hardly clear for either of the Norwegians to try to improve the contract. Jaggy led a club to Saeki's jack and the ♦3 went to the ten. Jaggy exited with the ♦J and Groetheim inexplicably played low on Saeki's queen. Declarer ruffed the club continuation and played three rounds of spades, but Jaggy ruffed, extracted the ♦K with his ace and led the ♣K to South's ace. Declarer's only additional trick was the ♥A. Four down; -1100. 13 IMPs to USA, 56-60.

Bd: 25	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 10762		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q2		
	♦ Q104		
	♣ A763		
West	East		
♠ K8	♠ 53		
♥ K108765	♥ J43		
♦ KJ7	♦ 865		
♣ 94	♣ KQJ102		
	South		
	♠ AQJ94		
	♥ A9		
	♦ A932		
	♣ 85		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	3♥	Dbl*
Pass	4♠	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠
All Pass			

It looks as if this was one of the situations not discussed by the fledgling partnership of Shivdasani/Saeki, with 3♠ intended as a game try but interpreted as competitive. Saeki made four on a low heart lead by playing the queen and eventually playing ♦A, diamond; +170.

Jason, in 4♠ after trying for game with a maximal overcall double, also got a heart lead, won the queen, and lost a spade finesse. He ducked Robison's club switch, won the club continuation, ruffed a club, cashed the ♥A, and crossed to the ♠10 to draw the last trumps. Then a diamond to the nine endplayed West. Nicely played for +620. 10 IMPs to Mavromichalis, 70-56.



"You're not the first guy I've played with so far and you may not be the last."

Bd:26	North		
Dlr: East	♠ J97		
Vul: E/W	♥ KQJ95		
	♦ 5		
	♣ A1087		
West	East		
♠ AQ10	♠ K654		
♥ A107	♥ 864		
♦ J104	♦ A6		
♣ J643	♣ KQ95		
	South		
	♠ 832		
	♥ 32		
	♦ KQ98732		
	♣ 2		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
		1♣	4♦
Dbl	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
		1♦*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Had Itabashi seen his partner's hand he would surely have passed Robison's card-showing double of 4♦ and collected 300 or 500 (with a fourth round of spades to promote a second trump trick if necessary). In the event, he took out to 4♠ and finished in an unlovely 5♣, down 200. The good news: Justin didn't double.

Aa's Precision 1♦ silenced Saeki, and Jaggy led the ♥K against Groetheim's 3NT for an easy -100. 3 IMPs to Mavromichalis, 73-56.

Bd:27	North		
Dlr: South	♠ 7		
Vul: Both	♥ A7		
	♦ J953		
	♣ A96532		
West	East		
♠ AKJ543	♠ 962		
♥ Q65	♥ 108432		
♦ 87	♦ 42		
♣ Q7	♣ K84		
	South		
	♠ Q108		
	♥ KJ9		
	♦ AKQ106		
	♣ J10		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
			1♦
1♠	3♣(1)	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♦
All Pass			
(1) Fit-showing			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
			1NT
2♠	3♣	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

Saeki might still have made 3NT had Groetheim not given him a spade trick after leading the ace to get a count, but it was a lot easier this way; +600.

Jason, slightly too strong for a "count everything" 14-16 notrump, started with 1♦ and momentum carried him to 6♦, which would have been playable only on a non-spade lead. Not here; -100. 12 IMPs to USA, 68-73. Once Justin opted for his fit-jump in clubs I don't think his follow-up 4♣ was the right action with such a poor suit and a high-card minimum. Both 4♠ and 4♦ would be less misleading. Jason intended his 4NT as something in the DI family, but Justin treated it as RKCB. Jason would have passed 5♦ had Justin retreated after interpreting 4NT as it was intended.

Bd: 30	North		
Dlr: East	♠ AK103		
Vul: Both	♥ 52		
	♦ Q86		
	♣ K1032		
West		East	
♠ Q5		♠ 9742	
♥ K87		♥ AQJ3	
♦ AJ72		♦ 93	
♣ 8765		♣ AQJ	
	South		
	♠ J86		
	♥ 10964		
	♦ K1054		
	♣ 94		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
		1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Aa's notrump was 14-16 and Groetheim's game raise was partnership policy. Saeki led the ♥10, which was good for USA because it didn't blow a trick...more or less. Aa won the jack and led a low heart, putting in dummy's eight to gain an extra entry when Saeki did not make the unusual second-hand high play of the nine. Club to the queen, heart to the king, club to the jack, ♣A...no luck there. Now a spade to the queen and king. Jaggy cashed the ♠A and the ♣K, and led a spade to Saeki's jack for a diamond play. Aa had no ninth trick; -100.

Robison/Itabashi conducted a classic approach forcing auction to a partscore that they would not have chosen had they seen one another's cards. Jason led the ♣9 around to the queen and Itabashi took eight tricks with a further club finesse; +90. 5 IMPs to USA, tying the match at 73.

Bd: 31	North		
Dlr: South	♠ Q107		
Vul: None	♥ 43		
	♦ 109863		
	♣ Q63		
West		East	
♠ K982		♠ 54	
♥ K6		♥ AQJ98	
♦ Q42		♦ J5	
♣ A1094		♣ K752	
	South		
	♠ AJ63		
	♥ 10752		
	♦ AK7		
	♣ J8		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
			1♥
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Rdbl
Pass	2♦	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
			1♦
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Jaggy's silence (undoubtedly because there was no time for discussion) gave the Norwegians a free run to 3NT. Jaggy led the ♦10 to the king and Saeki switched to a low spade, declarer rising with the king to run the hearts. North parted with three diamonds and South released the ♦7, so declarer was without resource. He played a diamond but South won and cashed his side's spades for one down; -50.

The Americans also reached 3NT from the West side after Jason had opened in his modest heart suit and tiptoed through various minefields to escape. Justin also led the ♦10 to the king, but here Jason elected to clear diamonds and now Robison could lead a spade to the king for his ninth winner; +400. 10 IMPs to USA, ahead now 83-73.

Bd: 32	North		
Dlr: West	♠ 962		
Vul: N/S	♥ K95		
	♦ K72		
	♣ AK32		
West		East	
♠ J85		♠ Q7	
♥ 8763		♥ AQJ4	
♦ QJ6		♦ 10854	
♣ 1087		♣ Q54	
	South		
	♠ AK1043		
	♥ 102		
	♦ A93		
	♣ J96		

Open Room/Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
Pass	1♣	1♥	1♠
3♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Neither North divined that it might be best to pass South's competitive double of 3♥ and neither took out to 3NT, which would have had a legitimate chance even on the best lead of a diamond (East gets caught in a strip squeeze and endplay), so E/W got away with their buccaneering tactics. Justin's 4♠ looks like an awfully big bid, even for Justin. 4♠ had no chance on a heart lead and went one down at both tables; -100. No swing.

Canada's L'Ecuyer/Fergani and e-bridge's Lev/Blanchard bid and made 3NT in their respective matches.

Bd: 33	North		
Dlr: North	♠ AJ9632		
Vul: Both	♥ 106		
	♦ 82		
	♣ KJ5		
West		East	
♠ K1085		♠ Q	
♥ J982		♥ Q753	
♦ 764		♦ K3	
♣ 104		♣ AQ9862	
	South		
	♠ 74		
	♥ AK4		
	♦ AQJ1095		
	♣ 73		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	1♠	2♣	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
	2♠	3♣	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	

Both N/S pairs did very well to reach 3NT. Itabashi led a heart to hold Justin to nine tricks,

but Aa led a club and Jaggy took ten; +600/+630, 1 IMP to USA, 84-73.

In the other matches, only L'Ecuyer/Fergani achieved this result, North starting with 1♠.

Bd: 34		North	
Dir: East		♠ QJ65	
Vul: None		♥ 85	
		♦ J1086	
		♣ K93	
West		East	
♠ K108432		♠ 9	
♥ QJ1062		♥ K94	
♦ Q9		♦ K543	
♣ ---		♣ QJ742	
		South	
		♠ A7	
		♥ A73	
		♦ A72	
		♣ A10865	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
(1) Majors			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
2♠	All Pass	Pass	1NT
2♥(1)	Pass	Pass	Dbl
2♠	Pass	3♥	All Pass

Groetheim elected to emphasize his six-card suit and succeeded in silencing Saeki, who really had nothing more to say. Jaggy led the ♦J, ducked to the king, and a heart went to the king and ace. Groetheim let the heart return run to dummy's nine for a spade to the king and a spade. Declarer lost three trumps and the red aces for +110.

In contrast, Robison showed both majors, locating his side's best fit, but Jason, maximum for 1NT with no major-suit wastage, reopened with a takeout double. That permitted Robison to show his sixth spade but Itabashi had a distinct preference for hearts and showed it. The defense started with two rounds of trumps, then a third round when South won the ♠A. Declarer had to lose three spade tricks and the red aces and so was one down; -50. What an odd deal! 4 IMPs to Mavromichalis, 77-84.

Bd: 36		North	
Dir: West		♠ A64	
Vul: E/W		♥ AQ64	
		♦ A96	
		♣ A32	
West		East	
♠ QJ2		♠ 10853	
♥ KJ102		♥ 75	
♦ J1074		♦ K85	
♣ 94		♣ QJ108	
		South	
		♠ K97	
		♥ 983	
		♦ Q32	
		♣ K765	
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Justin, declaring 3NT from the North side, got the lead of the ♠3 from Itabashi, seven, jack, ace. He ducked a club, then ducked the spade continuation, won the third spade, and cashed ♣AK, Robison parting with the ♥2. A heart to the queen held and Justin cleared the suit to establish his long card. West would have been endplayed, to boot, had he held the ♦K, but not here. Two down; -100.

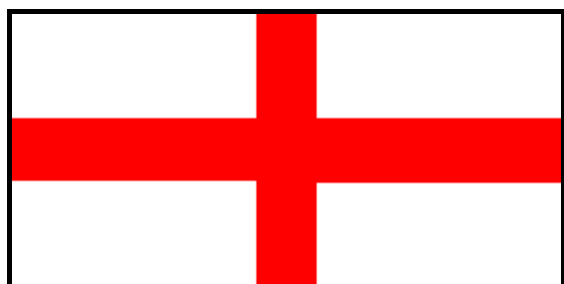
Saeki declared 3NT from the South side and got the lead of the ♥J from Groetheim, queen, seven, ... eight. He continued with a heart to the nine and king to set up a late finesse of the six, and Groetheim switched to the ♠Q, which held. Saeki won the spade continuation in hand, led a heart to the *ten* and ace, then cashed the ♥6. He had two ways to make 3NT now and chose the simple line, leading towards the ♦K; +400. 11 IMPs to USA, 95-78. With just four deals remaining, that 17-IMP lead looked pretty good.



Bd: 37	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 73		
Vul: None	♥ 9763		
	♦ 83		
	♣ KQ762		
West	East		
♠ AKJ1062	♠ 54		
♥ K52	♥ AQ10		
♦ K4	♦ AQJ95		
♣ 93	♣ J104		
	South		
	♠ Q98		
	♥ J84		
	♦ 10762		
	♣ A85		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♥*	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass
6♠	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥*	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♦*	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Facing a strong notrump, Robison set spades, then used RKCB, taking a chance on the missing trump queen. He would have gotten away with his gamble had Jason defended passively, but on the opening lead of the ♣A Justin signaled with the king and the slam was down one off the top; -50.

Facing a 14-16 notrump, Groetheim settled for a balanced slam invitation depicting a strong six-card spade suit. Against 4♠ Saeki led the ♦6 and Aa won the ♦K, played ♠AK, and reverted to diamonds; +480. 11 IMPs right back to Mavromichalis, 89-95.



Bd: 38	North		
Dlr: East	♠ 73		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q7652		
	♦ 74		
	♣ KQ107		
West	East		
♠ AK64	♠ QJ1092		
♥ 84	♥ J109		
♦ K652	♦ QJ83		
♣ 865	♣ 4		
	South		
	♠ 85		
	♥ AK3		
	♦ A109		
	♣ AJ932		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
		Pass	1♣
1♠	2♣	4♠	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
		2♦(1)	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
(1) 5M/4m or 5M332 (weak)			

I suspect that Jaggy would have tried to reach 4♥ but did not do so because he was not sure what his methods were over Saeki's 2NT. He was particularly unlucky here because Groetheim guessed to lead a low spade in a situation in which it was far from obvious to him that his partner would have spades rather than hearts. One down; -100.

Meanwhile, the twins didn't find hearts either, Robison's 1♠ overcall getting his side to 4♠ in a hurry. Had Jason continued to 5♣, he would have made it, of course, but with lots of defense and limited offense he preferred to try for four tricks rather than eleven. 4♠ went one down; -50, and Mavromichalis gained 4 IMPs in unusual fashion, cutting the deficit to 2 IMPs, 93-95.



Bd: 39	North		
Dlr: South	♠ KQ53		
Vul: E/W	♥ 108653		
	♦ 84		
	♣ Q7		
West	East		
♠ J8762	♠ 94		
♥ Q7	♥ J2		
♦ J93	♦ K1076		
♣ A108	♣ KJ962		
	South		
	♠ A10		
	♥ AK94		
	♦ AQ52		
	♣ 543		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Dbl	2♥
All Pass			

The lead changed hands on the penultimate deal when Jaggy/Saeki missed a fairly normal game.

Jason, slightly too strong for 1NT, started with 1♦ and had an easy jump raise at his second turn. Facing a fourth trump, Justin had a straightforward 4♥ bid; +450.

With his ♣Q seemingly worthless on the auction at his table, Jaggy decided not to push for a nonvulnerable game. Unfortunately, Saeki was completely maximum and didn't need the ♣Q. Plus 200 for Saeki but 6 IMPs to Mavromichalis, who took the lead by 4 IMPs with one deal remaining, 99-95.



"Oh yes, I've been tying my own shoes for years!"

Bd: 40	North		
Dlr: West	1 1093		
Vul: Both	♥ A986		
	♦ K76		
	♣ 962		
West	East		
♠ 2	♠ AQ74		
♥ 7432	♥ K		
♦ J432	♦ AQ109		
♣ QJ105	♣ A843		
	South		
	♠ KJ865		
	♥ QJ105		
	♦ 85		
	♣ K7		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Robison</i>	<i>Justin H</i>	<i>Itabashi</i>	<i>Jason H</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	1♠
2♦	2♠	3♣	Pass
3♦	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Groetheim</i>	<i>Jaggy</i>	<i>Aa</i>	<i>Saeki</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣*	Dbl(1)
1♦*	2♥	All Pass	
(1) Majors			

Itabashi's 3♦ was a comfortable contract and yielded ten tricks; +130. A chance? Well, maybe, because Jaggy/Saeki bought the contract the other way in hearts, and from the side that made a spade lead unattractive. Aa, with a difficult lead, started with the ♣4, king, queen, deuce. Jaggy took the trump finesse, the normal play, but Aa won the king, led the ♣3 to the ten, and saw Groetheim switch to the ♠3. Various ruffs and diamond tricks followed and when the smoke had cleared, poor Jaggy had only six tricks stacked in the right direction; -200. 2 IMPs to Mavromichalis, who lost the set 45-52 but won the match, 101-95 to reach the semifinals.

Mavromichalis would face the hot Canadians, who had crushed Sweden 102-26 in the second half to wipe out a 25-IMP deficit. In the other match, e-bridge would face England, who had survived a scare against India, hanging on to win by just 5 IMPs.

The Semifinals of the NEC Cup

by Rich Colker and Eric Kokish

We continue our coverage of the semifinal match between e-bridge (**Sam Lev, Bob Blanchard, Piotr Gawrys, Kristpher Jassem**) and England (**Brian Senior, John Armstrong, Pablo Lambardi, Brian Callaghan**). After the first 20-board session, England leads 40-38.

Second Half (Boards 21-40):

Bd: 1	North		
Dlr: North	♠ A9		
Vul: None	♥ Q984		
	♦ K4		
	♣ AKJ95		
West		East	
♠ J3		♠ Q64	
♥ J1052		♥ A63	
♦ AQ103		♦ J972	
♣ Q104		♣ 732	
	South		
	♠ K108752		
	♥ K7		
	♦ 865		
	♣ 86		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
	1♣(1)	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT	All Pass	
(1) 12-14/18+ balanced or 15+ with clubs			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Having already shown pretty much the values he held Gawrys had to choose between 2NT at his third turn and a gentle raise to 3♠. Given Gawrys' choice of 2NT Jassem did well to pass as eight tricks were the limit in notrump; +120.

Senior chose to treat his hand as too strong for a strong notrump, which propelled his side to 4♠—a fortunate contract on the lie of the cards. The defense was even friendlier as Lev chose a low heart lead and Blanchard rose with the

ace and returned the suit. Lambardi crossed to the ♣A, cashed the ♥Q for a diamond pitch, then played the ♣AK and ruffed the jack when Blanchard did not play the queen. ♠K, a spade to the ace, and a club on which Lambardi shed a second diamond guaranteed +420. 7 IMPs to England, now leading 47-38.

On the next two boards England lost 1 IMP on a second partscore overtrick and 2 more IMPs when their opening notrump was passed out, causing them to miss a four-four spade fit that played two tricks better and which Gawrys/Jassem found at the other table. The next three boards were two flat partscores and a flat game. England regained an IMP on the next board when Armstrong/Callaghan played in 3♣ and made five while Lev/Blanchard stopped in 1NT and made only two. At this point the excitement was driving the Vugraph audience into a near catatonic state. England's lead was now down to 7 IMPs at 48-41.

But the excitement was just about to begin.

Bd: 8	North		
Dlr: West	♠ A92		
Vul: None	♥ AQJ76		
	♦ 75		
	♣ K42		
West		East	
♠ J1074		♠ Q853	
♥ K109432		♥ 5	
♦ 2		♦ A1083	
♣ J5		♣ 9876	
	South		
	♠ K6		
	♥ 8		
	♦ KQJ964		
	♣ AQ103		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
2♦(1)	2♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♣	All Pass	
(1) Multi			

Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Lev	Senior	Blanchard	Lambardi
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Callaghan's Multi threw a monkey wrench into Gawrys/Jassem's auction and by the time they reached the four level neither seemed to know what he was doing. If 4NT was RKCB, then what were 5♥ and 5NT all about? (Hey, Piotr, wasn't the ♣K a key card here?) If 4NT was quantitative, what was 5♥? If 5NT was a sign off, then what was 6♣? (I forgot to show the extra key card last time?) So many questions, so little time. Not to worry. Krzysztow's 3♦ bid prevented the killing singleton diamond lead and now he was in with a chance.

Armstrong led the ♠10 and Jassem won in hand and played ♣A, ♣K, noting the fall of the jack with some satisfaction. He then played a diamond to the king and was at the crossroads. A heart to the ace followed by a diamond to the nine would bring home the contract. But who knew what the diamond position was? In fact, who even knew which suit Callaghan held for his 2♦ opening? After what must have seemed an eternity Jassen played...the ♦Q and the slam was down. Minus 50.

Blanchard led the ♥5 against 3NT, and Senior banged diamonds from the top for 11 easy tricks; +460. 11 IMPs to England, 59-41.

Bd: 9	North		
Dlr: North	♠ 82		
Vul: E/W	♥ AQ1073		
	♦ AK62		
	♣ J6		
West		East	
♠ AJ93		♠ Q10	
♥ 64		♥ K5	
♦ 109854		♦ J73	
♣ 53		♣ AKQ1092	
	South		
	♠ K7654		
	♥ J982		
	♦ Q		
	♣ 874		

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
Callaghan	Gawrys	Armstrong	Jassem
	1♥	1NT	3♥
Dbl	Pass	3NT	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Lev	Senior	Blanchard	Lambardi
	1♥	2♣	3♣
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

We may never know what Callaghan's double was supposed to mean, but he caught his partner with "the goods" and 3NT made with an overtrick.

Lambardi's 3♣ bid may have been intended as a tactical maneuver but Senior could not take a joke and bid 4♥. With four losers in the black suits and a trump loser as well ♠ finished two down; -100. 11 more IMPs to England, 70-41.

Bd: 10	North		
Dlr: East	♠ K4		
Vul: Both	♥ Q108765		
	♦ K93		
	♣ 97		
West		East	
♠ QJ63		♠ A9872	
♥ A		♥ J4	
♦ 1074		♦ J652	
♣ AJ1086		♣ Q4	
	South		
	♠ 105		
	♥ K932		
	♦ AQ8		
	♣ K532		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
Callaghan	Gawrys	Armstrong	Jassem
		Pass	1♣(1)
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Dbl	Rdbl	3♠	Pass
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
4♠	Dbl	All Pass	
(1) 12-14/18+ balanced or 15+ with clubs			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
Lev	Senior	Blanchard	Lambardi
		Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦(♥)	Pass	2♥
All Pass			

When the Poles finally uncovered their heart fit Callaghan emerged from hibernation with a double. Gawrys redoubled to tell the Brits that the hand belonged to his side but Armstrong showed his strong spade holding anyhow. Now Gawrys tried 4♥, but Callaghan was having none of it and backed in with 4♠. After all, who knew who could make what. But Gawrys said, "I know; it's not you who can make game." But he was wrong. With both black-suit finesses working and the ♠10 coming down, 4♠ was cold. In fact, to heap injury upon insult, when Jassem failed to lead a diamond John strong armed 11 tricks for +990.

It's not clear why Lev didn't double Lambardi's 2♥ but when he passed the auction died very quickly. The defense started well with the ♠Q to the king and ace, but when Blanchard led back the ♠9 Lev could not read the distribution and tried a third spade, allowing Pablo to pitch one of dummy's losing clubs as he ruffed in his hand. Plus 140 was worth 15 IMPs for England, who increased their lead to 85-14.

Bd: 12	North		
Dir: West	♠ 10986		
Vul: N/S	♥ AK872		
	♦ Q		
	♣ K84		
West		East	
♠ AQ54		♠ J32	
♥ 1053		♥ 964	
♦ 6432		♦ 98	
♣ Q3		♣ A10762	
	South		
	♠ K7		
	♥ QJ		
	♦ AKJ1075		
	♣ J95		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	3NT
All Pass			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

We include this deal to demonstrate that the

beauty of any action is in the eye of the beholder. Plus 690 for Jumping Jassem, a nervous +620 for Suffering Senior after two rounds of spades and a switch to the ♣3, ducked to the ace. Admittedly, this is not an easy hand for South in the Acol system, in which hardly anything is forcing or sacred. 2 IMPs to e-bridge, 43-85.

Bd: 13	North		
Dir: North	♠ K9		
Vul: Both	♥ 7543		
	♦ Q10		
	♣ 98765		
West		East	
♠ J1073		♠ Q64	
♥ 6		♥ 98	
♦ J97		♦ 65432	
♣ KQ1043		♣ AJ2	
	South		
	♠ A852		
	♥ AKQJ102		
	♦ AK8		
	♣ ---		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣*
Pass	1♦*	Pass	2♦(1)
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♥	All Pass	
(1) Artificial game force			
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦*	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Should fairly natural systems be able to reach seven on these N/S cards? I'd like to believe that the answer is yes. If 3♠ showed length, Senior's 4♥ looks like an underbid, but as our great and good friend P.O. the Technician tells us, "If 3♥ was positive and North has no controls in clubs and diamonds, must he not have something in spades?" Well, okay, but king-and-one spade in combination with four trumps is a lot more than "something in spades." After canceling all future dates with Jaggy and Robison, I have now added P.O. to the list, something for which he is grateful. If I

haven't yet antagonized Brian, it's only because I haven't had time yet.

It looks as if Jassem interpreted Gawrys' 3♠ as natural, and "raised" to five to ask him to bid six with decent spades. All in all a very unimpressive auction, the main culprit being that 2♦ thing that stole a valuable round of bidding.

It's normally a good day when you can win 13 IMPs by missing a cold grand slam, but as you've seen in the first half of this set, this has not been a good day for mighty e-bridge. England, 85-56. Still time to pull out the match. Better hurry, though.

Bd: 15	North		
Dir: South	♠ Q3		
Vul: N/S	♥ J754		
	♦ K106		
	♣ K976		
West		East	
♠ 10985		♠ 7642	
♥ A109		♥ 2	
♦ A73		♦ J9842	
♣ Q82		♣ AJ4	
	South		
	♠ AKJ		
	♥ KQ863		
	♦ Q5		
	♣ 1053		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
			1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
			1♥
Pass	2NT*	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Lambardi went down in 4♥ on a spade lead by leading a diamond to the queen and ace and later leading a diamond to the ten for a club discard. With the ♦J and ♣A offside, that did not work, not that anything else would have; -200.

Jassem's 3NT was not quite cold either. He won West's spade lead in dummy to lead a diamond to the queen and ace. A diamond

back would have been lovely for the defense, but Callaghan played a second spade, normally enough. When he came in with the ♥A, he switched to the ♣Q, covered by the king and ace. Armstrong cleared spades, but then had to make four discards on the hearts, and threw two diamonds painlessly. He wanted to keep his spade as long as possible and could part with a low club, but then would have to release either the ♣J or the precious spade. Hoping that Callaghan held the ♣10, Armstrong unblocked the ♣J, intending to pitch the spade next. Next never came; +630. 13 IMPs to e-bridge, 69-87.

Could e-bridge pull this one out?

Board 16 was flat, which was good news for England, but there was a bit of life in Board 17.

Bd: 17	North		
Dir: North	♠ AQJ8		
Vul: None	♥ 1095		
	♦ AQ542		
	♣ 10		
West		East	
♠ K1065		♠ 9732	
♥ J6		♥ AKQ8	
♦ 873		♦ K10	
♣ A864		♣ KQJ	
	South		
	♠ 4		
	♥ 7432		
	♦ J96		
	♣ 97532		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
	1♦	Dbl	1♠
Dbl	Pass	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	4♠	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
	1♦	Dbl	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Dbl	All Pass	

Senior did well to double 4♠ as the opponents' auction was not a hesitant one. He led the ♦A and switched to the ♣10, Lev winning in dummy to lead a low spade to the ten and queen. Senior drove out the ♦K and Lev came to the ♥J to lead towards dummy's ♠9. Senior went in with the jack to force dummy with the

♦Q. Lev played winners and Senior got only the ace-eight of spades for two down; -300.

In the Open Room, Jassem's psychic 1♠ was greeted by a penalty double from Callaghan. Although it was only about 80% certain that Jassem had psyched, Gawrys could not afford to raise because the raise of a suit that has just been doubled for penalty should not be interpreted as natural. A moment later his opponents were in game with some chance that they would go down by misplacing the spades. Gawrys decided not to be greedy and went quietly. After two rounds of diamonds, Armstrong led the ♠9 and passed it to the jack. He ruffed the third diamond in hand and led a second spade and was in trouble when Jassem showed out. He ducked to the eight, but Gawrys cashed the ♠A and played diamonds for three down; -150. 4 IMPs to England, 91-69.

Bd: 18	North		
Dlr: East	♠ 974		
Vul: N/S	♥ Q1042		
	♦ 10		
	♣ AK1087		
West		East	
♠ QJ1032		♠ 85	
♥ AK53		♥ 8	
♦ AKJ5		♦ Q987643	
♣ ---		♣ 965	
	South		
	♠ AK6		
	♥ J976		
	♦ 2		
	♣ QJ432		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
		3♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	All Pass		
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
		3♦	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

Lev was a bit unlucky to find the ♠AK on lead against 6♦ but that was balanced out by the fact that Blanchard only had three major-suit cards and so had a legitimate play without a

spade lead; -50.

Jassem was a bit unlucky to have Callaghan create a scenario that made it seem like he was out stealing, but that was balanced out by the fact that even if this were true, Jassem didn't have the tickets to think that he was going to get rich by doubling. Ah, but who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The shadow that is Brian Callaghan certainly seems to know. The number for 5♠ redoubled under the new scoring is 800, nonvulnerable. 13 IMPs to England, 104-69.

Bd: 19	North		
Dlr: South	♠ A9		
Vul: E/W	♥ 874		
	♦ QJ4		
	♣ AJ962		
West		East	
♠ 76		♠ K10542	
♥ Q52		♥ K109	
♦ 10765		♦ 92	
♣ 7543		♣ Q108	
	South		
	♠ QJ83		
	♥ AJ63		
	♦ AK83		
	♣ K		
Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
			1♦
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♦	All Pass	
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
			1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

Maybe this deal is tougher than it looks, although these two ugly auctions do not illustrate the mainstream difficulties inherent in this layout.

The well-oiled Lambardi/Senior partnership needs a few more days to iron out the kinks, but playing an unfamiliar system, it was not intuitive for Lambardi to rebid 2NT over 2♣. With hearts three-three, Lambardi coasted

home after a spade lead, ducked to the king, and a diamond switch. He won, led a heart to the jack and queen, won the second diamond and played ace and another trump for +420.

The danger in reversing with four cards in your first suit is that partner will assume you have five of them, which is what happened to Jassem/Gawrys. 6♦ was also an unlovely contract, but it had a play after the lead of the ♠7, ducked to the king, and a spade return. Jassem won the ace, crossed to the ♣K, went to the ♦Q, and ruffed a club with the ♦A, then ♦K, diamond to the jack. Had the trumps split three-three, the drop of the ♣Q tripleton would have seen Jassem home. Callaghan's long trump was the setting trick; -50. 10 IMPs to England, 114-69.

Open Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Callaghan</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Armstrong</i>	<i>Jassem</i>
4♣	Pass	5♣	All Pass
Closed Room			
West	North	East	South
<i>Lev</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Blanchard</i>	<i>Lambardi</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥
3♣	3♥	4♠	All Pass

Lots of scope for creativity here. 5♣ seems like a fair alternative with the West hand. I don't care for Blanchard's 4♠, but perhaps it's not as misdirected as it seems. Both contracts went one down, the defenders leading trumps against Callaghan each time they won a diamond trick. No swing.

England won the second half, 74-31 and won the match 114-69, sending e-bridge to the OUCHI Cup.

The final will feature England and Canada (124-69 winners over Mavromichalis in the other semifinal) in a potential preview of the final of the 2002 Commonwealth Games, scheduled for the Hacketts' home town of Manchester in July.

Bd: 20	North		
Dlr: West	♠ QJ84		
Vul: Both	♥ J632		
	♦ K98		
	♣ 74		
West		East	
♠ 7		♠ AK10632	
♥ ---		♥ A74	
♦ 106542		♦ 73	
♣ AKQ10632		♣ J5	
	South		
	♠ 95		
	♥ KQ10985		
	♦ AQJ		
	♣ 98		

Images of Our Game



"If you think that's funny, we've got a few more results that will have you in stitches."



"The life of a superstar can be a lonely one."



"Just don't look at him. He thinks holding his head that way is normal."



"Are high scores good or bad?"



"Mon Dieu!"



"...and then he ruffed his partner's ace and tried to cash his ♠8—but I still had the nine!"



"Oh-h, Bobby, can I have your autograph?"



"It's the story of my life—we ran out of boards."



"So, I jabbed him with my pencil and when he dropped his hand, I saw the ♠1Q."



"This is my pose for GQ...but you can have it."



"If I curl up in a little ball, maybe no one will know I'm here."



"Yes, I'm going to go ahead with the tongue opiercing."



"But Sam, *you* had the ♠A!"



"This stiff upper lip stuff is overrated."



"And you say he doubled his partner's pass,...and then you redoubled!? Really."